

THE CATHOLIC RADICAL

“...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed.” Peter Maurin

February/March 2014

Price: For whatever it's worth.

The Folly of Domination

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Galagoda Atte Gnanasara, a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk recently said, “This is a Buddhist nation, so why are they trying to call it a multicultural society?” According to *The Boston Globe* (1/12/14), “In just over a year, the saffron-swathed monks of Bodu Bala Sena — Buddhist Power Force — have amassed a huge following, drawing thousands of fist-pumping followers who rail against the country’s Muslim minority.”

Simultaneously, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is insisting that a precondition for peace with Palestinians is their recognition of Israel as a “Jewish state,” despite the fact that 25% of Israelis are not Jewish.

Meanwhile, Boko Haram, an Islamic militant organization, seeks to establish a “pure” Islamic state ruled by sharia law in Nigeria, disenfranchising the 35% of Nigerians who are Christian and the 18% with indigenous religions. Ten thousand people have been killed in Boko Haram’s campaign, marked by bombing churches and schools, and kidnapping western tourists.

Different sects of Muslims are fighting in Iraq, where Sunni militants took over the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi at the end of last month. Their rebellion was largely spurred by the failure of the Shiite-dominated government to treat the Sunni minority fairly.

These conflicts evoke the nightmares of genocide in Darfur, of apartheid in South Africa, of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, of mass murder in Nazi Germany, of Catholic Spain’s oppression of Jews, of Protestant

England’s oppression of Irish Catholics, and European America’s isolation and marginalization of Native Americans.

Although Catholicism was marked not too long ago by the triumphal notion “no salvation outside the Church,” Pope



Catholics burning Jews in 16th-century Spain

Francis now says, “Religion has the right to express its opinion in the service of the people, but God in creation has set us free: it is not possible to interfere spiritually in the life of a person.” He calls us “to accept the legitimate differences typical of brothers and sisters.” In his World Peace Day message on New Year’s Day, he said, “Christian solidarity presumes that our neighbor is loved not only as a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but as the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit as another brother or sister.”

The language for respect of minorities differs from religion to religion, culture to culture, and nation to nation, but the

Time to Act

The United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on January 15 declaring that, while some nations have made progress in promoting wind and solar energy, the consumption of fossil fuels continues to rise especially in developing nations like China — so much so that, in as little as 15 years, CO² in the earth’s atmosphere will reach levels that cannot be reversed. While governments have dragged their feet, the IPCC says, CO² levels have risen so high that even an immediate global end to fossil fuel use would only stabilize the problem. It would take the earth several centuries to repair the atmospheric damage. The IPCC chastised coal-burning countries like China, but also more environmentally-conscious nations which buy large quantities of products produced by and transported via fossil fuels. The full IPCC report can be found at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/#.UtlyLvYo5jc>.

The Catholic Radical, as an organ of the Catholic Worker movement, subscribes to the idea that God appointed humanity to be a steward of the earth and its creation. Global warming, caused by human consumption of fossil fuels, is a most serious failure of that responsibility. Nonetheless, we do not give in to despair. We urge everyone to dramatically decrease reliance on fossil fuels, to consume less, to eat more organic and locally-grown food, to eschew the purchase and use of plastic, and to encourage religious, governmental, and business leaders to make immediate and serious commitments to develop, promote, and rely exclusively on renewable energy sources. The time has passed for equivocating. The human family can and must take up this challenge and succeed. Each initiative proclaims hope and inspires others. Ω

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CATHOLIC



RADICAL

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Founded in 1933, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Dominance

(Continued from Page 1)

imperative is universal. The alternative is tension, unrest, and, in the end, a spiral of death.

While Pope Francis makes a religious argument against domination, there is a potent secular apostle of respect for the downtrodden and oppressed. He was Theodor Seuss Geisel, or, as he is more popularly known, Dr. Seuss. With marvelous illustrations in children's books with lessons for all ages, Dr. Seuss said it simply and well. In "Horton Hears a Who," (1954) Dr. Seuss argues "a person is a person no matter how small." In "Yertle the Turtle," (1958) Dr. Seuss skewers delusions of superiority. After



the overthrow of the tyrannical Yertle, Dr. Seuss says,

And today the great Yertle,
 that Marvelous he,
 Is King of the Mud.

That is all he can see.
 And the turtles, of course...
 all the turtles are free
 As turtles and, maybe,
 all creatures should be.

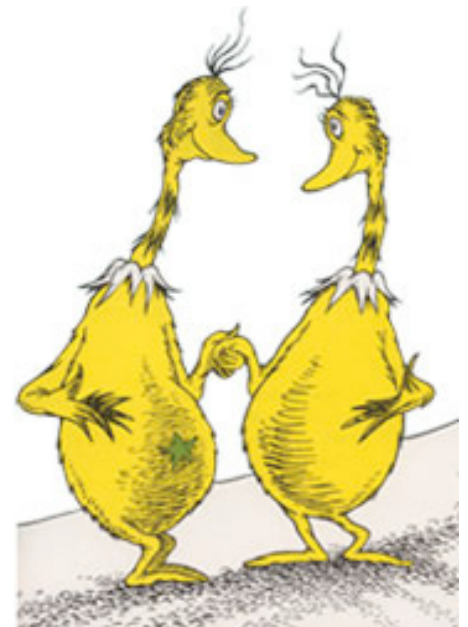
In 1961, in the heart of the American civil rights struggle, Dr. Seuss wrote "The Sneetches" about a society that is prejudiced against those who don't have stars on their bellies. In this book, the dominant social order is upset by a salesman who, for a hefty fee, tattoos stars on the bellies of those without them, which leads the dominant class to pay the same merchant a fee to remove their stars. On and on it goes, with the notion of dominance changing all the time until:

Then, when every last cent
 Of their money was spent,
 The Fix-it-Up Chappie packed up
 And he went.
 And he laughed as he drove
 In his car up the beach,
 "They never will learn.
 No. You can't teach a Sneetch!"

But McBean was quite wrong.
 I'm quite happy to say
 That the Sneetches got really quite
 smart on that day,
 The day they decided that
 Sneetches are Sneetches
 And no kind of Sneetch is the best
 on the beaches
 That day, all the Sneetches forgot
 about stars
 And whether they had one,
 or not, upon thars.

Dr. Seuss felt so strongly that human beings had to stop threatening one another that in 1984 he wrote his most frightening work, "The Butter Battle Book," in which people who cannot resolve a conflict over whether to butter bread on the top or the bottom have an arms race that leads them to the brink of extermination.

Dr. Seuss understood that the anger the Grinch feels at the singing in Who-ville, which he tries to prevent by stealing all the Who's Christmas decorations and presents, pales when compared with the joy the Grinch experiences by being accepted by the Whos.



And what happened then...?
 Well...in Who-ville they say
 That the Grinch's small heart
 Grew three sizes that day!
 And the minute his heart didn't feel
 quite so tight,
 He whizzed with his load through the
 bright morning light
 And he brought back the toys! And the
 food for the feast!
 And he.....HE HIMSELF...!
 The Grinch carved the roast beast!

Dr. Seuss knew human happiness depends on respecting the rights of everyone. We are a human family, enormously diverse, but bound together as sisters and brothers. We may not all like green eggs and ham, but maybe we could try them, and certainly we should respect those who do. Ω.

The Gospel According to Maria

by Mayra Fernández

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from a Latina version of the life of Mary. Although it was published in 1995, the book has special resonance today as the Spanish-speaking portion of the US population fast approaches the majority. These particular segments call to mind Pope Francis' concern for migrants and his belief that, "The Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems." English translations of the Spanish have been added in brackets.

The Egypt Experience

We went to Egypt, running from *ese hombre malo* [this bad man], Herod. We didn't have our green cards, so we had to go in the middle of the night, through the cold desert, following the stars, going southwest, looking out for snakes and *bandidos* [robbers]. We believed in God, my José and I, but we were still afraid, you know. We were so young! And this child, this sweet child, *m'hijo* [my son], who slept in my arms, well, God had trusted us with him. What could we do but follow what the angel said and go to Egypt?

My heart was pounding as we crossed the border. So many chariots. I saw a man trampled to death trying to cross into Egypt. You know the Egyptians didn't want us, even though our ancestors had built some of those pyramids, aqueducts, and other structures for them. *Ingratos* [ingrates], that's what they were! But we made it across. What a sense of relief we felt! That Herod would not bother us here!

But we were *basura* [garbage] for these people. My José, a master carpenter, *el mejor* [the best], was so abused. He'd stand on the corner and the rich Egyptians would come and ask for a carpenter. They'd see my José, how strong he was. Then they'd work him all day without rest and pay him a quarter of what he was worth — because he was a Hebrew. He'd come back a broken man. But the next

day, he'd be up again. After all, we had to eat.

I myself would leave *Jesúsito* [little Jesus] with a neighbor and go clean houses. What big houses those Egyptians have. Three and four rooms! But I didn't mind. I could help my José. *Jesúsito* would get his lessons in Hebrew paid. That's what mattered.

...I know my Jesús remembered his Egypt experience well. How the Egyptian children made fun of him because of his accent, his hair, his clothing, his food. He'd come home crying and I'd hold him and say, "*M'hijo* [my son], don't listen to them. Be proud of who you are." But I couldn't take the pain away. What's a mother to do?



Maybel Royds

So when I heard about the centurion's servant being cured or Jairus's little girl (Matthew 9:23-26; Luke 7:1-10), I knew Jesús, *m'hijo*, my boy, remembered being a stranger in the desert of nowhere. He remembered what inclusive love is; it didn't matter whether you were related or not. We are all *familia* [family] (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21)....

Esos Leprosos [Those Lepers]

A leper came to him and pleaded on his knees, "If you want to," he said,

"you can cure me." And Jesús, having compassion on him, stretched out his hand and touched him. "Of course I want to!" he said. "Be cured."

Matthew 8:1-3

Jesús, my wonderful, beautiful baby, much loved by all of us, especially by his father, José, was illegitimate. A bastard. Everyone in Nazareth knew it. Jesús knew it, because the kids never let him forget it. We were an enigma, José so solicitous of his son, teaching him the carpenter's ways, teaching him the Torah, holding him tenderly. My parents were very proud of their grandson and showered him with whatever they could give him, poor as we were.

But the sting from his playmates' words still hurt. Jesús knew what it was like to be alienated from his people for reasons that had nothing to do with him.

So you see, he understood the lepers' plight. How they were shunned from society, from the temple and synagogues. How their families had to visit them while staying at a distance, if they visited them at all. It's much like the gays and lesbians in today's world, especially if they have AIDS. They are saying about AIDS what they said about lepers in my time: that God has visited wrath on them because of their sins. How ridiculous, *m'hija* [my daughter]. How hurtful!

So you see, my Jesús cured the lepers, made them whole again. Allowed them back in society. But most of all, and people forget this, he tried to change the society that wouldn't take care of lepers.

...Remember, Jesús was taunted because he was different, but it never stopped him from keeping an open invitation to all people. Are you that way, *m'hija*? Do you have an open invitation in your heart? Or do you fall for the classism and racism of our culture? Do you exclude people from your life because they are too *india* [Indian] or too *oscura* [dark] or too white? Or their education isn't high enough? Or, God forbid, that they are gay or lesbian? Ω

Overcoming a Persistent Outrage

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In response to a recent editorial I wrote *Against racism*, a friend caught me off guard by saying, “Of course, you know the most pernicious bigotry is *sexism*.” Before I could even wrap my mind around her statement, I heard a National Public Radio story (January 2) on efforts in Germany to provide medical help to victims of female genital mutilation (FGM). The story stopped me dead in my tracks. I wrote an article for *The Catholic Radical* in 1996 on this topic. I am appalled to learn that millions of girls aged 4 to 13 are still undergoing this cruel practice. Somehow, I assumed FGM had become less common. I was wrong.

FGM is a painful procedure that eliminates or greatly reduces the ability of women to have sexual pleasure, closes the vaginal opening to the size of a pin, and increases the likelihood of infections, infertility, and pain during intercourse. It is the most striking example of the repression of women imaginable. According to the World Health Organization, “mutilation is practised in 28 African countries, where 140 million women have been subjected to the brutal practice and a further two million are at risk every year.” That it is perpetrated by families, religious leaders, and medical personnel in Africa is horrifying enough without learning that it is now becoming more common in Europe and the United States. And yet, the western outcry against FGM is small.

Other sexist practices tend to grab the headlines: religious covering of women from head to toe, denying women the right to drive cars or take up a profession outside the home, child marriages, so-called “honor killings” of women who flee abusive relationships, and, the most persistent expression of sexism, rape. Because they are discussed, policy makers have attempted to address some of these issues, but FGM remains virtually unknown.

And yet, unlike the issue of wearing or not wearing a head scarf, FGM has a cruel permanence even more physically lasting than rape. FGM evokes in me a special rage. When I hear of it, I want all

physicians to regularly check on girls to verify that they have not been mutilated. I want the passage of laws severely punishing anyone responsible for female genital mutilation. I want religious leaders to denounce the practice with clarity and vigor. I want US aid to be withheld from countries where the practice is tolerated. I am so angry I want male perpetrators to have the sensitive parts of their sexual organs surgically removed. I want them to endure something of the torment they have



Sister Fa

inflicted on girls.

But then, I realize that retributive “justice” only deters misconduct in the fictitious world of action movies. In reality, violence always breeds violence, and legislation without public persuasion has little impact. Prohibition, however well-intended, did not end drunkenness. It drove drinking underground where it became more frenzied. To the extent that FGM is mixed up culturally with religious circumcision, (even though it is not called for in the Koran or Old Testament), sexual fidelity, modesty, and, erroneously, with health, it will continue to be practiced.

Thankfully, African women, including Senegalese hip-hop star Sister Fa, are leading a successful campaign against FGM. She joined a United Nations project that began in 2008 which persuaded residents of 6,000 villages and

communities in six countries to abandon the practice.

Sister Fa, who herself was “cut” as a child, told *The Guardian* last February, “We’re using music because the young people are the future. They need to understand that they are not alone. It is when you are alone, when you think: ‘How can I not cut my child? She will be marginalized, pushed in a corner.’... I hope that people will feel inspired. I tell people that foot-binding in China ended in 20 years – why can’t female genital mutilation end the same way?”

According to Nafissatou Diop, Coordinator of the United Nations Population Fund, and Joint Program on Female Genital Mutilation, “We are working in 12 out of 17 priority African countries and have seen real results. The years of hard work are paying off with FGM prevalence rates decreasing. We reach the young people, the women, but the men too. In their heads, we have to make them believe they can marry a girl who is not cut. Believe me, FGM would stop tomorrow if the men wanted it to.”

There’s the rub. If men would only stop telling women their attraction is conditional. Women never needed bound feet, elongated necks, 16-inch waists, plucked eyebrows, make-up, tanned, pierced, or tattooed skin, huge breasts, or mutilated genitals to be attractive. Women are naturally beautiful. My granddaughter is beautiful, as is my daughter and my wife. For me, the best adornment they can sport is a warm, confident, and generous smile. It attracts me like nothing else.

Sister Fa is courageously empowering girls to resist FGM, but movie stars like Don Cheadle, Morgan Freeman, and Denzel Washington, and male sports superstars too, could also contribute by stressing that women are beautiful as they were created. When men stop demanding that women need to be disfigured, women will enjoy the freedom to live as they choose without fear of social rejection.

Let us encourage all public figures to confront female genital mutilation and to help relegate it to cruelties of the past. ♪

How Big is the Wave?

by Michael Caldwell

The wave is coming.
I can't see it yet, but I know it's coming.
I wonder how big it will be.
I wonder how to prepare.
My monkey mind mumbles fearful frets.

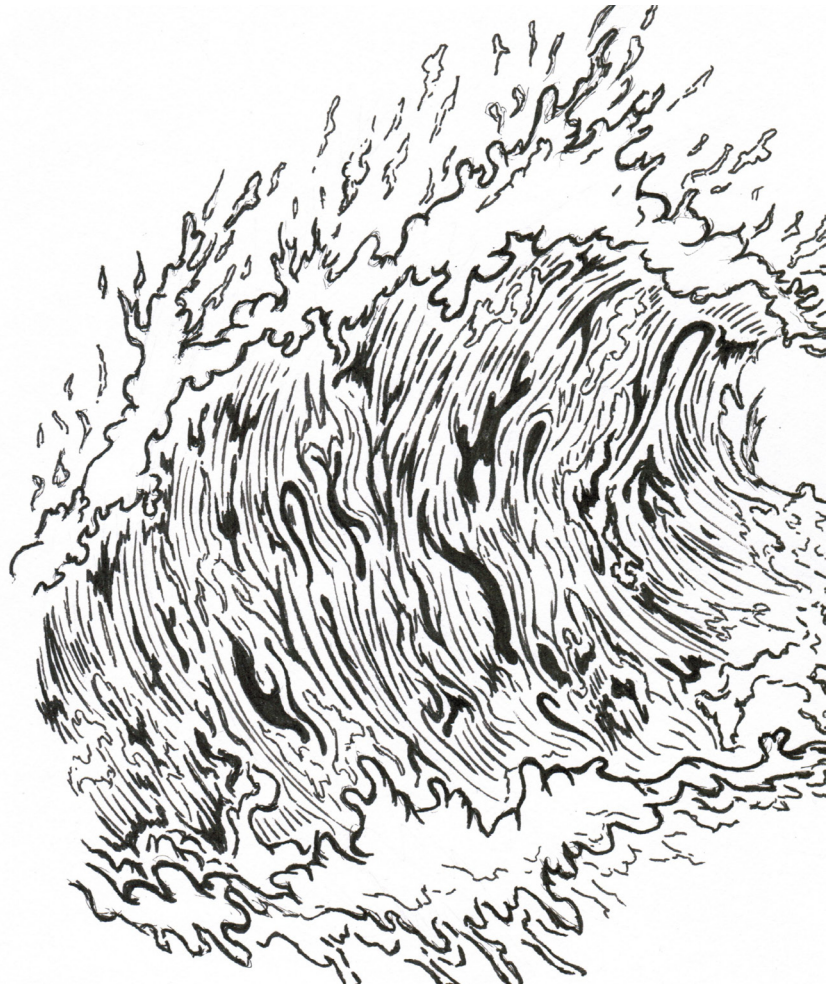
Then, like a wave itself,
A thought hits me hard:
If I run fast straight toward the cresting wall of water
And dive headfirst
At just the right time,
I can pierce its power,
Transcend its tumult.

Letting myself go under, I can find a way through,
Diving, surviving, maybe thriving
In deep waters beneath surface turbulence.

The wave comes. I see it now.
I stand onshore and watch.
It is big — unimaginably huge —
I tell myself size doesn't matter
If, like a Zen master,
Full of archetypal practice from unconscious ages
I trust my technique
And believe my timing into being.

It's closer now. I tell myself to go.
I bracket my run, focusing,
Increasing speed, gearing my plunge,
Hitting top speed...

As the roar of the wave hits deafening decibels,
I dive. Ω



Aiden Duffy

Dedicated to my orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Brian Aros, on the occasion of my decision to replace my arthritic knees.



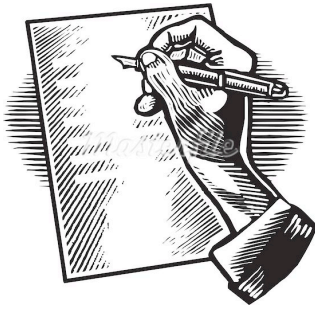
The Personalist Pope

Pope Francis pays his own hotel bill, carries his own luggage, writes personal letters and makes personal phone calls, leaves the Vatican at night to visit the poor incognito, appeals for refugees on the island where many land from Africa, washes the feet of prisoners, including women and Muslims, refuses to live in the papal palace, wears the same shoes he was given years ago in Brazil, denounces unbridled capitalism, rides in an open car, and says, "When it

comes to social issues, it is one thing to have a meeting to study the problem of drugs in a slum neighborhood and quite another thing to go there, live there and understand the problem from the inside and study it."

The actor Kirk Douglas says, "I am a Jew who loves the Pope.... He is a man who wants us to understand each other no matter what our differences may be, and to do our best to help one another. And that is the core of what every religion should be." Ω

Letters



Dear Scott,

Thank you for sending me *The Catholic Radical*.... As you can probably imagine, good reading materials are not easy to come by in a federal prison. So these help a lot. Your paper really has a lot of good writing and is very informative. I became a Catholic four years ago in prison (I have been in nine years), and turned my life around, thanks to Jesus. The C.W. Movement is one of the best, most peaceful things I have found in the Church so far. Thanks again. In Mary,

Colin William Neal
Cañon City Colorado

Dear Scott, Claire, and family,

Good to get your newspaper, as always! ...As someone once said, you know the truth about society when you are on the bottom of it. We are getting quite joyful about our new Pope, who seems to be encouraging our way of life as Catholic Workers.

However, it is not easy living this

lifestyle with children, and we have ongoing challenges that are different from parents who are trying to “fit in” and help their children be successful in “the world.” Where do we sit in all of that? I swing from feeling for the children, and trying to help them feel “normal,” to challenging them to sense a greater, God-given, purpose for their lives, and what that means in terms of being “outsiders.” We try and give them a grounded home life, and send them to school where they can get to know the choice, and also know that they can be “worldly” successful if they want to be. We have found the age group that finds this the hardest are 10 to 15 year olds. Before that, they aren’t really aware of how different we are, and after that they have some maturity and confidence to handle it better. We have also had lots of conversations by then about the issues of standing for the truth and justice, and what that can mean in terms of feeling alienated from the general culture, but more at peace within ourselves. There are also those victims of the violence of our greed and selfishness who need us to advocate for them — should we stop in order to be more comfortable?

I was re-reading the “100 Ways To Be A Catholic Worker” list yesterday — it’s on the back of our toilet door for easy perusal. It’s such a fun list that gets to the spirit of what we do! Many of our guests and visitors have “understood” us better

once they’ve read it, and I certainly felt less lonely, more understood, and more convicted when I re-read it.

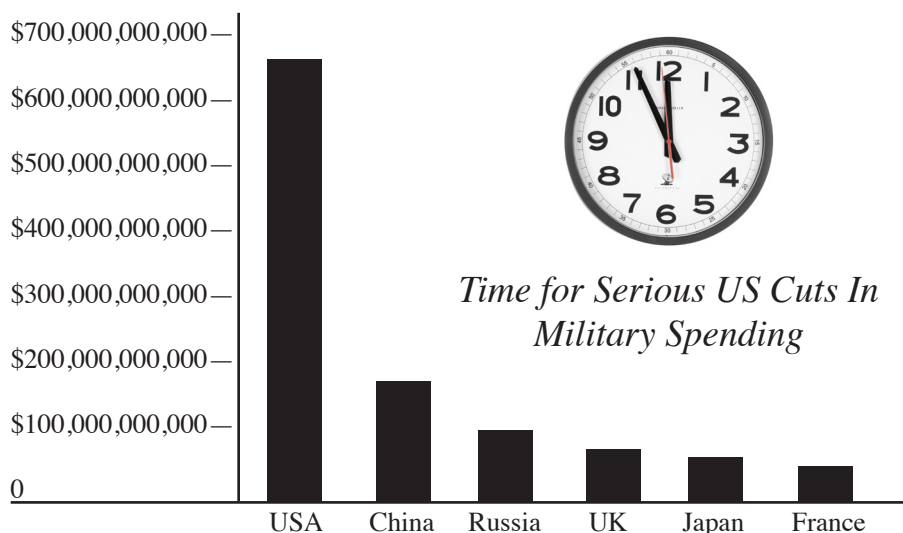
But it occurred to me that raising children in the midst of “the list” required a few addendums. So here’s some more for all the families in the movement — hope you feel less lonely and more understood! I’m sure you have a few of your own to add too, which I’d love you to send us.

- Explain to your children that we are doing good things, and weird does not always equal wrong.
- Accept that your children still feel weird.
- Have conversations with your children about choosing careers/lifestyles that God wants them to, and not what will get them a nice house so they don’t feel weird.
- Enjoy the friendship of generous people who do think you’re doing good things.
- Welcome older children back into the Catholic Worker fold, after they’ve discovered they really do appreciate the values they’ve grown up with — it’s a wild world out there! Even wilder than a Catholic Worker home!
- Have several children so they have company with having weird parents.
- Rage against the TV — ban it from the house — and call television “child abuse.”
- Enjoy compliments from your children’s teachers that they are mature, responsible, deep thinking, kind, etc....
- Enjoy a home day with the children when there are war memorial days at school — and write to the school explaining why.
- Pray for wisdom, courage, and love for us, and for the children.
- Pray they find good friends to support them in their faith.
- Make sure your children know that “first world material poverty: is still in the top 20% of wealth in the world — and that we are rich in relationships with each other, those we help, those who help us, the Earth, and God — who does not want us to fill and foul the earth with violence.
- Endure huffy 12 year olds who claim they are having self-esteem problems.
- Give them a kiss and a hug when they’ve settled down.

Love and blessings to you all,

Anne Rampa
Peter Maurin Catholic Worker Farm
Dayboro, Queensland, Australia

The World’s Top Military Spenders in 2012



Being a Catholic Worker: 100 Suggestions

by Bill Wylie-Kellerman

Take the Sermon on the Mount very seriously.

Don't take yourself too seriously.

Convene the kingdom of God over soup.

Compel them to come in.

Ask how far the line goes back.

Embrace holy mother poverty.

Try and figure out where allowance went last month.

Consider vigiling in the hospital emergency room to be an intercession.

Pray in places where it is forbidden.

Draw a line. Stand on it. Get arrested.

Do jail time as a monastic retreat or at least a vacation.

Reside in the margins.

Receive mail for guests who left years ago.

Suffer thievery.

Persevere in non-sequitur conversation.

Bless those who curse you, including guests.

Clarify your thoughts.

Be stunned at the phone bill.

Honor conscience, in yourself and others.

Swing the mop like a flashy dance partner.

Be skeptical of forms, bureaucracies, institutions, and people who put you on hold.

Refuse to be called a saint.

Keep an advent journal and share it with your friends.

Create a tradition, and nourish it.

Plot the demise of small rodents.

Try writing an easy essay.

Find out it's harder than you think.

Learn to say you're not on house today.

Agonize over your church.

Rage against patriarchy.

Never prepare a pre-sentencing statement.

Take your chances on the Holy Spirit.

Hold small children on your lap.

Find love a harsh and dreadful thing.

Find love.

Bless the food in the making.

Be civil when answering the phone at 3 A.M.

(You may swear it if rings again immediately.)

Make the run to Crown Candy and try not to bring back too much ice cream.

Devise new recipes for zucchini.

Discern the times. Take time. Give time.

Do time. Add thyme.

There's no such thing as too much garlic, but take it easy on the red pepper.

Dress (tastefully) from the clothing room.

Build a new society in the shell of the old.



Try and figure out who's pilfering toilet paper.

Find a new place to hide on your day off.

Read Gandhi in jail.

After awhile, throw away the I.O.U.'s

Reach your limit and put a guest out.

Argue over where the limits are.

Keep a stash of banners (liturgical and political) in the basement.

Don't let the principalities get you down.

Whip up a carrot cake for someone's wedding.

Walk the way of the cross through the streets of your city.

Study the faces of folk down and out.

Curse the filthy, rotten system.

Marvel at the survival skills of your guest.

Weep quietly in your room when necessary.

Stay in touch.

Sweat.

Beg.

Track down a foul smell. (Look behind the

couch.)

Pick through crates and trash at Soulard

Market for edibles.

Be a go-giver.

Loan your car to excess.

Call yourself a personalist.

Clean wounds.

Figure out who keeps turning up the heat.

Scrounge for pampers in a crisis.

Practice non-violence.

Tipple the communion wine only on rare occasion.

Learn to juggle.

Refuse to keep records to get government money.

Refuse government money.

Hell, refuse to pay taxes.

Argue economics over coffee.

Argue over economics and coffee.

Pray more or less faithfully.

Do things for the love of Christ.

Have a painting party and serve burritos.

Put a candle in a jar.

Take it to a missile factory.

Wait for people to come and go.

Negotiate a household truce.

Scrub soup pots as an exercise in contemplation.

Visit prisoners. Be one.

Buy a farm.

Lay out the paper with a flair for graphics.

Mark anniversaries.

Celebrate the Incarnation. Ω

Catholic Worker Calendar

Wednesday, February 12 & 26, March 12 & 26— Evening Prayer or Mass:

Please join us in prayer and song. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

Wednesday, February 19 — Genetic

Roulette: The Gamble of our Lives: Please come see an award-winning film by Jeffrey Smith on the harm of genetically engineered foods. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments and discussion to follow.



Wednesday, March 19 — Bringing

Christ's Divine Mercy to Prisoners: Come hear lay Catholics Eric Mahl and Lewis Brooks speak about their faith journeys and their work at the Worcester County Jail. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

Mason Street Musings

During December, we had a string of difficult guests who, for a variety of reasons, did not leave us on the best terms. I couldn't help but feel like their failures were also my own. After offering hospitality for 29 years, I know that addiction, mental illness, abusive relationships, incarceration, criminal record, racism, ignorance, bad health, bad nutrition, lack of employment at a living wage, and just plain bad luck conspire to keep people from climbing out of poverty, but, in December, it seemed like our house of hospitality was merely a stopping off point on people's determined march to disaster. The day before our only guest who found work was set to move into his own apartment, a judge sent him to jail for a Facebook violation of an old restraining order. I felt as low as I did on Easter in 1983 at Saint Benedict's Catholic Worker in Washington, DC when, after many hours preparation for a special dinner, I discovered all the men were drunk.

But then, in early January, our former guest Joseph stopped by to thank us for his stay and to tell us that he's working and has his own apartment. A few days earlier, Claire bumped into another former guest on the sidewalk, who was also full of gratitude. And yesterday, I was greeted at the grocery store by the charming smile of a cashier named Christina, who was a

guest we never thought would make it.

That afternoon two men, named Lewis and Eric, turned up at the door from a lay Catholic community dedicated to Christ's Divine Mercy. They gave us a beautiful painting and told of their admiration



for our founder, Dorothy Day. I invited them in and learned that they volunteer at the Worcester County Jail, a super needful place, as all jails are. They were enthusiastic about service and inspired by our patron saints as well as Charles de Foucauld, the founder of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus. After they left, Robert said, "They reminded me of myself when I was younger."

We all can get weary at times, but little gestures, like Joseph going out of his way to thank us and update us on his progress,

lift our spirits. Jesus shows His humanity when He complains to the only cured leper who returns to thank Him, "**Weren't ten made whole? Where are the other nine?**" But I didn't experience Joseph's gratitude as a skimpy representation of those who should have come by, but as the tip of a mighty iceberg of grateful people who just didn't get a chance to tell us.

And truth be told, we get more kind words from our readers than we deserve. Many of you send us a donation and then thank *us*. What extraordinary kindness!

Big, fluffy snow flakes are falling gently outside my office window right now, while my youngest son, Aiden, makes his lunch and listens to Frank Sinatra singing "It's Almost Like Being in Love." Before that, Jimmy Durante sang, "That's the story of, that's the glory of love." Earlier this morning, Claire received confirmation that she is entered, as I am, in the 118th running of the Boston Marathon. Two days ago, we went on a full moon run. And now I hear Van Morrison singing, "Can I just have one more moon dance with you, my love? Can I just make some more romance with you, my love?" (Wow, Aiden sure is on a roll.) Come to think of it, I'm not discouraged, but pretty darn grateful for an inordinate shower of grace. I hope each of you enjoys the same blessing. Ω

Scott

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